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DE RUEHC #7312 1542237  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O R 032224Z JUN 09  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE IMMEDIATE 1038  
INFO ORG FOR SECURITY CO OP IN EUR COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS STATE 057312

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OSCE](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GG](#)  
SUBJECT: OSCE/PERMANENT COUNCIL: RESPONSE TO RUSSIAN  
DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KARASIN

11. (U) Post is authorized to present the following statement  
at the June 4 Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.

Begin text:

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

We welcome Deputy Foreign Minister Karasin to today's  
meeting. We thank him for the broad overview he has provided  
us on Russia's perspective and policy toward the South  
Caucasus.

Clearly, the United States and Russia have markedly different  
views on the situation in Georgia. We stand with most  
countries in condemning Russia's recognition of the  
"independence" of the separatist regions of South Ossetia and  
Abkhazia, and strongly support the sovereignty, independence,  
and territorial integrity of Georgia within its  
internationally recognized borders. We remain committed to  
long-term conflict resolution, and seek to advance the  
establishment of peace throughout Georgia.

Accordingly, we strongly support the Geneva discussions, and  
hope the July 1 meeting will yield concrete results on  
outstanding security, humanitarian matters, and human rights  
issues. We urge all parties to quickly implement the  
incident prevention and response mechanisms agreed in  
February, and we repeat our call for joint visits, together  
with international monitors, to the sites of incidents. We  
note that the South Ossetian mechanism held its second  
meeting May 29, and hope all parties will build on the  
progress made there.

We also hope progress can be made on pressing humanitarian  
and human rights issues, particularly the urgent problem of  
achieving free and unhindered humanitarian access to the  
South Ossetian region. Russia committed to such access under  
the August 12 cease-fire agreement and UNSCR 1866. We also  
hope to see progress on ensuring the voluntary, safe, and  
dignified return of internally displaced persons, as well the  
ability to address and protect against human rights abuses.

The United States considers a continued OSCE presence in  
Georgia critical to efforts to restore stability to the  
region, resolve humanitarian concerns, strengthen respect for  
human rights, and promote the implementation of OSCE  
commitments. We continue to support the Greek Chairmanship's  
status-neutral proposal for an OSCE presence in Georgia, and  
note that it enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority  
of OSCE participating States. We regret that Russia has made  
it impossible to achieve consensus on a Georgia Mission  
mandate.

Progress on the issues cited above would help restore trust  
and confidence to the region. Progress would also  
demonstrate a good-faith effort to take tangible steps to  
advance our common European security concerns.  
Unfortunately, many Russian actions in Georgia, such as its  
establishment of military bases in the breakaway regions, or  
its deployment of FSB border guards to the administrative

boundary lines, have had quite the opposite effect. The same holds true for allowing Russian companies to explore for oil and gas in Georgian waters, and promoting illegitimate elections in South Ossetia.

We again call on Russia to honor the commitments it made in the August 12 cease-fire agreement and September 8 implementing measures, particularly point five of the cease-fire agreement, which calls for Russia to withdraw its troops to positions held prior to the start of hostilities. We also strongly urge Russia to fulfill point three of the cease-fire agreement, which calls for providing free and unhindered humanitarian access to the South Ossetian and Abkhaz regions of Georgia. We remind Russia that it has a responsibility to ensure respect for human rights is upheld and international humanitarian law is observed in those areas of Georgia that are under occupation.

We thank you for speaking to us today, Deputy Foreign Minister Karasin, and sincerely hope we will be able to make progress on a Europe that is more secure and at peace.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

End text.  
CLINTON